

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAPE T 00356 241024Z

ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15

NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 AID-05 /078 W

-----014326 241027Z /14

O R 240954Z FEB 78

FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6822

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE CAPE TOWN 356

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PDEV, WA, SF

SUBJ: NAMIBIA - BOTHA HINTS INDEPENDENCE DATE MAY BE DELAYED

1. SPEAKING TO PRESSMEN IN WINDHOEK BEFORE RETURNING TO CAPE TOWN, FEB 23, FOREIGN MINISTER BOTHA TOLD NEWSMEN THAT "THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO GRANTING INDEPENDENCE BY THE END OF THIS YEAR, BUT THE TIME ELEMENT IS BECOMING A PROBLEM".

2. BOTHA REPORTEDLY SAID THAT ALTHOUGH THE DIFFERENT PROCESSES--REGISTRATION OF VOTES, THE WORKING OUT OF ELECTION MODALITIES AND THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN--COULD TAKE PLACE WITHIN TEN MONTHS, IT DEPENDED ON THE DELIBERATIONS OF THE ELECTED CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY WHETHER THE INDEPENDENCE DATE WOULD BE MET.

3. ACCORDING TO PRESS ACCOUNTS, BOTHA ALSO SAID THERE

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WAS "UNEASINESS TO SAY THE LEAST" AMONG MANY SECTIONS OF THE POPULATION ABOUT THE PROLONGED WESTERN INITIATIVE. HE SAID THERE WAS A DESIRE FOR AN ELECTION DATE TO BE SET AND TO BRING THE INITIATIVE TO A HEAD. "BUT THERE IS ALSO A REALIZATION THAT INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION IS VERY IMPORTANT," HE ADDED, AND "IF IT CAN BE OBTAINED IT IS THE FIRST PRIORITY". HE SAID HIS DEPT WAS

STILL IN CONSTANT CONTACT WITH THE FIVE WESTERN POWERS
ON THE SWA QUESTION.

4. COMMENT: THIS IS THE FIRST TIME THAT A SOUTH AFRICAN
OFFICIAL HAS PUBLICLY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE DATE FOR ELECTIONS
AND INDEPENDENCE COULD POSSIBLY SLIP BEYOND THE END OF THIS
YEAR. AT THE SAME TIME, BOTHA'S REMARKS APPEAR TO REDUCE
THE URGENCY OF AN EARLY ANNOUNCEMENT OF ELECTIONS WHICH
THE SAG HAS REFERRED TO BOTH PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY.
BOWDLER

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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